Post

7 Naturalized Citizens of U. S. Indicted as Spies for Germany

Nazi Spies

A sealed indictment, charging seven naturalized American citizens with prewar conspiracy to transmit military information to Germany in violation of the Espionage Act, was opened yesterday in the Federal District Court at Newark, N. J., Attorney General Biddle announced.

The indictment, returned by a Newark grand jury Tuesday, alleged the seven German-Americans conspired between April 1, 1939, and December 6, 1941, to send to Germany documents, code, maps, photographs and other information relating to the national defense. The Justice Department said two of the seven have been serving in the Army.

Three of those named in the indictment were among 29 defendants charged in an indictment returned in the same court Tuesday with conspiring to act as Nazi agents without proper notification to the Government.

Individuals Indicted

The Justice Department said those named in the sealed indictment were:

Fritz Schroeder, 43, former national leader of the German-American Vocational League, New York.

Felix Gustav Adolph Jahnke, 41, New York, and Gustav Wilhelm Kaercher, 47, Westwood, N. J., both of whom recently completed two-year sentences for violations of the Foreign Agents Registration Act.

Hans Philip Koenig, 41, and Joseph Benedict Lieblein, 29, both of New York and both now in the Army.

Carl Kranz, 43, Rochester, N. Y.

Eric Heinrich Wilhelm Wedemeyer, 41, Floral Park, N. Y.

The maximum penalty for violation of the prewar espionage statute is 20 years' imprisonment.

Basis of Operation

While the conspiracy allegedly was directed from overseas by German government agents, the indictment charged that officers of the German-American Vocational League, New York, served as a clearing house and arranged for meetings and the exchange of information.

Three methods were used in transmitting information to Germany, the indictment charged. They included a secret short-wave radio station for direct communication between the defendants and Nazi headquarters in Hamburg and maintenance of mail drops in such cities as Buenos Aires, Lisbon, Madrid, Hamburg and Shanghai for handling letters written in code or invisible ink.

The indictment also charged that plans, documents and mechanical devices were microphotographed and the small negatives given to couriers working on ships.

The Justice Department said the case, climaxing an intensive investigation started by the FBI in 1938, is closely related to the famous Duquesne and Ludwig cases of 1941 and 1942 in which 41 persons were convicted for acting as German spies.